



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE

The Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA), consisting of Bingham, Bonneville, Butte, and Jefferson counties, had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.6 percent for April 2001, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the previous month and five-tenths of a percentage point from April 2000. The LMA's unemployment rate was 1.3 percentage points lower than the state's rate of 4.9 percent and nine-tenths of a percentage point lower than the national rate of 4.5 percent.

An increase in farming and construction activities helped April reach a monthly increase of 560 in the *Civilian Labor Force*—more than 350 individuals from Bonneville County and most of the remaining from Bingham County. Unemployment decreased by 100 people and total employment increased by 660 in April. The year-over-year comparison shows the *Civilian Labor Force* increased by 3,300 people, unemployment decreased by 270 and total employment increased by 3,570.

Butte County held the lowest unemployment rate in the Bonneville LMA at 3.0 percent in April, followed by Bonneville, Jefferson, and Bingham counties at 3.3, 3.4, and 4.4 percent, respectively. The unemployment rate for Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, decreased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 3.4 percent, and decreased four-tenths of a percentage point from April 2000.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs (jobs by place of work) increased by 1,140 over the month, for a total of 62,990 jobs in the LMA. Both *Goods-Producing Industries* and *Service-Producing Industries* increased over the month, adding roughly 500 to 600 jobs each. The largest percentage increase by industry was seen in

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, & Jefferson counties

	Apr 2001*	Mar 2001	Apr 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	82,500	81,940	79,200	0.7	4.2
Unemployment	2,940	3,040	3,210	-3.3	-8.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6%	3.7%	4.1%		
Total Employment	79,560	78,900	75,990	0.8	4.7
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	81,730	80,880	78,430	1.1	4.2
Unemployment	2,590	3,340	2,880	-22.5	-10.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2%	4.1%	3.7%		
Total Employment	79,130	77,540	75,550	2.1	4.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	62,990	61,850	61,510	1.8	2.4
Goods-Producing Industries	9,160	8,630	9,030	6.1	1.4
Mining & Construction	4,060	3,470	3,810	17.0	6.6
Manufacturing	5,100	5,160	5,220	-1.2	-2.3
Food Processing	2,630	2,710	2,820	-3.0	-6.7
Ind. & Com. Mach. & Computer Equip.	440	450	520	-2.2	-15.4
All Other Manufacturing	2,030	2,000	1,880	1.5	8.0
Service-Producing Industries	53,830	53,220	52,480	1.1	2.6
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,210	2,170	2,310	1.8	-4.3
Wholesale Trade	6,070	6,070	6,150	0.0	-1.3
Retail Trade	11,430	11,270	11,330	1.4	0.9
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,900	1,890	1,850	0.5	2.7
Services	21,420	21,350	20,480	0.3	4.6
Government Administration	5,350	5,120	4,910	4.5	9.0
Government Education	5,450	5,350	5,450	1.9	0.0
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

Construction, as an additional 590 jobs were noted over the month. A dry, workable spring helped to enhance early construction activities as the year-over-year comparison showed an increase of 130 jobs. *Manufacturing* was the only industry to experience a decrease for the month, losing 60 jobs or 1.2 percent. The commodities market is still playing a role in the economy as *Food Processing* showed a loss of 80 jobs during the same time period. From a year ago, the losses were double that in both *Manufacturing* and *Food Processing*. *Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment* also experienced a loss both over the month (10 jobs) and the year (80 jobs). Although *Wholesale Trade* stayed the same over the month, it saw a loss from a year ago of 80 jobs including both *Durable* and *Nondurable* products. *Transportation, Communication, & Utilities* increased by 40 jobs for the month, but lost 100 jobs from April 2000 in *Communications*.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs saw relatively the same increase in a year-over-year comparison. Jobs increased by 1,480, with the larger increase coming from the *Service-Producing Industries*. *Services* added 940 jobs, with *Business Services* and *Engineering & Management* adding over 200 jobs each. *Government Administration* and *Construction* both added over 200 jobs from April 2000.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- Downtown Idaho Falls has a new look – in fact it requires a closer look from all drivers and pedestrians. No longer are traffic lights controlling every corner, but rather stop signs (with the exception of E Street, which experiences enough traffic to warrant traffic lights). The city's Public Works Division and Idaho Falls Power made the change and removed the lights in mid-May, but the plan is to keep the poles in place as they monitor safety following the changes. The Downtown Development Corporation recommended the removal of the lights over a year ago and now plans to add decorative lighting, bicycle racks, benches, and trash receptacles to make downtown more pedestrian-friendly.
- A batting cage complex called the Field of Greens recently opened in Idaho Falls on Broadway just west of Rocknack's Hardware Store. The complex has five batting stations, and seven pitching machines that will pitch at different speeds as well as slow- and fast-pitch softballs. A batter gets 15 balls per token and a \$10 hitter's special will buy 12 tokens. Joel Motes, the owner, is working with the Idaho Falls Padres to have hitting clinics during the summer at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.
- Timberline Outfitters moved from its River Parkway location to A Street. The store sells outdoor clothing and equipment. Part-owner Wade Seeley said better foot traffic and the renovations of the downtown area prompted the move.
- Environmental Management Inc., an Idaho Falls-based company responsible for grounds maintenance, facility maintenance, custodial services, refuse and recycling, and minor construction, was awarded a contract with the U.S. Air Force Space Command. Although the company will manage the contract from the Idaho Falls location, it will provide services at Malmstrom Air Force Base, the Minuteman ICBM silos the base overseas, and the Montana Air National Guard complex in Great Falls.
- Ucon hired its own police officer and will now have its local patrol, with Bonneville County patrolling as necessary on the off hours. Paul Jagosh, former Idaho Falls police officer, took the job.

Butte County

- General Manager Bernie Meyers of Bechtel BWXT Idaho, LLC announced his retirement would officially begin August 1, 2001. Meyers has been general

manager of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory's (INEEL) main contracting company since the switch to Bechtel two years ago. Meyers knew at the start of the contract that retirement would be a viable alternative within a few years, and he made it official in May. Deputy General Manager Bill Shipp will follow Meyers as general manager.

Fremont County

- St. Anthony hosted its annual Free Fishermen Breakfast. St. Anthony has supplied the traditional breakfast just before the opening of fishing season for the past 47 years. The breakfast started at 6:00am and finished around 2:00pm. Display tables were set up for merchants to display their wares and give out information, but no selling took place. Extemporaneous entertainment went on during the morning around an 11:00am posting of the flag. Normally, around 5,000 people are served at this annual breakfast, although it has served up to 10,000.
- Ashton will replace North Fremont High School as a \$9.5 million levy just passed, allowing the district to make some changes. It was the third attempt for the levy, as previous attempts in 1998 and 1999 fell short of the required percent of voter approval. The proposed plan is to construct a 90,000-square-foot 300-student high school on district-owned land. The district will also use the levy to complete safety-related renovations on several other area schools.

Madison County

- Erickson Pontiac-GMC, Inc. will be moving to a 30,000-square-foot building on five acres at West Main Street near the U.S. Highway 20 entrance. A groundbreaking ceremony was held mid-May and construction has already commenced. The building has an expected completion date of October. The new facility will include new and used car and truck sales, a service department, an auto body repair and paint division, and a quick lube/auto detailing service.

Tanya Albán, Labor Market Analyst
150 Shoup Avenue, Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 542-5628
E-mail: talban@labor.state.id.us